

Conference Description

National Conference Objectives

- Enhance the value of CE as a USDA Forest Service management program, including integration with other programs such as Interpretation.
- Expand capability of conference attendees to leverage and coordinate their efforts with other Forest Service, Federal, and State initiatives and programs.
- Foster increased communication within the CE/Interpretive Services Network.

Workshop Description

Invasive Species: Prevention Through Education

Approximately 30 attendees met to learn more about the biological pathways of plant invasions, the importance of the development of vouchers to identify potential invasive species, what efforts have been conducted nationally and internationally to reduce the risk of infestation, and what educational tools have been developed by the USDA agencies that addresses this threat.

An overview of presentations will be available for review at <http://ceconference.symbols.gov>



Following the informative presentations, participants discussed lessons learned and the potential benefits of an awareness program. Also discussed... the challenges of communicating the threat and potential tactics for making an impact. Finally, the group discussed the needs of the field in order to adequately address the issue.

Roles were defined at each table and a post-it® note brainstorming system was utilized to tap the collective brainpower in the room as quickly and effectively as possible. Team Leaders facilitated table discussions, Scribes captured table discussion highlights, and Runners brought prioritized input forward on large Post-its®. A Spokesperson with a gift for brevity from each table shared highlights and common themes with the large group.

Agenda



Opening Remarks

Iris Velez
Acting Assistant Director Conservation Education

Session Objectives

Maria Birkhead

Questions

- What were the presentation highlights?
- What are the potential benefits of an effective invasive species awareness program?
- What are the challenges... the things that stand in the way of our success?
- What are some recommended tactics... actions we need to take in the field in order to achieve the best possible results?
- What specifically does the field need (information, resources etc.) in order to get the job done?

Next Steps

Iris Velez

Summary/Close

Maria Birkhead

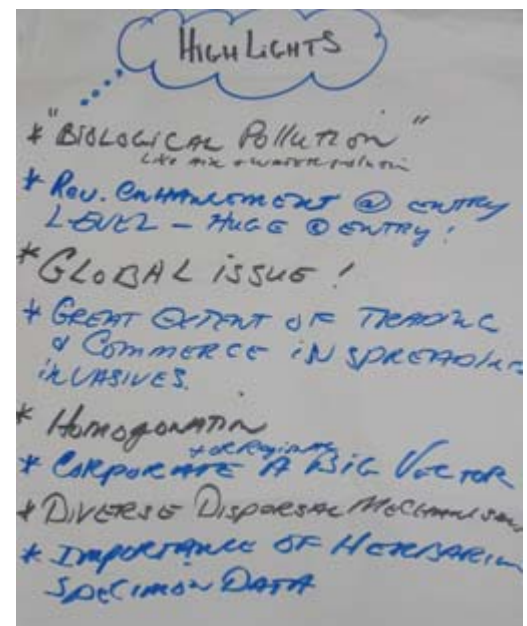
What were the presentation highlights?

Table Discussions:

- This is a global issue... The world has gotten smaller
- It is a much more extensive problem than most understand
- The #1 labor activity worldwide, pulling weeds is having a huge socio-economic impact
- The dispersal mechanisms for invasive species are diverse
- Disturbance is a factor of promoting infestation
- Understanding the pathways or vectors is key to slowing the spread
- Trade plays a major role in the increase of invasive species
- Maps showing the patterns of spread over time can help tell the story
- Herbarium specimen data is important
- Our systems for quarantining invasive species are not always effective
- There is much to learn

Group Consensus:

- This is a global issue and requires a massive effort
- The effort will require significant resources
- Corporate/regional businesses are major vectors
- Trade/commerce a pathway
- Industry responsibility needs to be addressed (e.g. regulation, taxation of nurseries, boat sellers etc.)
- Individuals must act responsibly (i.e. backyard perennials and wedding butterflies etc.) if we are to address the problem effectively
- The term "Biological Pollution" (similar to air and water pollution) will help us understand the importance of the issue
- One-world vegetation... the homogenization of our eco-system is a major threat



What are the potential benefits/ideal outcomes of an effective invasive species awareness program?

Table Discussions:

- Slowing/stopping the spread... Public awareness/public becomes a partner
- Labeling system for nursery trade to inform public of natives
- Stricter regulations for increased compliance in shipping
- Pro-action signs for the public... Teacher training/incorporate curriculum into schools
- Behavior changes (e.g. boat washing, backyard natives)
- Public recognition and reporting of suspicious plants... Citizen action groups
- Connection of individual actions and spread of invasives... Rapid response
- Call to action... Corporate and consumer responsibility
- Utilizing existing partners (i.e. Forest Supervisor working with executive partners... work with Public Affairs in message)
- Office of Personnel (OPI) to include in-state educational standards... eventually national standards
- Establish a reliable infrastructure
- Huge array of tools that we can use as “hooks” to inform, educate people
- Affect global policy
- Healthier forests and healthier ecosystems worldwide



Group Consensus:

- Proactive education for personal awareness
- People taking action to be part of the solution rather than the problem... “No one wants to be a vector!”
- Public as a partner... Government can’t deal with weeds alone
- Education Standards cover invasive species at the national level
- Increased regulation, enforcement and compliance
- Healthy Ecosystems!

What are the challenges... the things that stand in the way of our success?

Table Discussions:

- Dollars for research/education etc.
- Lack of personnel
- Lack of inspections
- Lack of knowledge of organisms (research!)
- Political recognition
- The influence of money
- The apathy of the public
- The huge scale and longevity of the problem
- So many pests!
- You fight a fire once... you may fight a weed a lifetime
- International economic issues
- It means changing behavior... very difficult
- Current aesthetic values
- WalMartization



Group Consensus:

- Bureaucracy/red tape
- Money for research, education and personnel
- Special Interest money/undo influence
- Resistance from entities with vested interests
- Huge scale, long term problem... overwhelming
- Communicating without "Doomsday" scenario... How to educate without disenfranchising public
- Enforcement tough... changing values/behavior
- International economic issues
- Educating public on what a healthy ecosystem is... declining connection to the natural world

What are some recommended tactics... actions we need to take in the field in order to achieve the best possible results?

Table Discussions:

- Pull up weeds
- Bounty on wood
- Research on beneficial uses
- Write it into public education curriculum
- Research beneficial uses (cookbook) yum!
- Need regional curricula
- Leadership by example
- Legislative action through
- Established exotic plant councils
- National awareness weeks
- Labeling of nursery stock so consumers can understand what is native and non-invasive
- Interpretative signage
- Utilize existing educational resources and materials of the Forest Service and our partners
- Lead by example in our personal lives as well as professional
- Pull up weeds (local action) "Weed Jerks"
- Weed door hangers with information on what to look for and what to do
- Interpretive signage at developed sites and trailheads... checking clothing, shoes, tires, firewood etc.



What are some recommended tactics... actions we need to take in the field in order to achieve the best possible results? (continued)

Large Group Brainstorm... Strategies:



- Education Awareness Campaign:
 1. Find partners to develop and implement regional plans
 2. Look at what already exists
 3. Expand and build upon educational opportunities and management activities
 4. Develop multi-agency partner talking points
- National campaign & national awareness events
- Interpretive plan for districts and regional curricula
- Lead by example... eradicate in visitor center areas etc. and involve the public in the effort. Plant only indigenous non-invasive species

- Social Science Research
- Lobby for money from Management. Education is cheaper than eradication
- Prioritize the plants and insects that are the most serious threats, then target where to address these geographically
- Give landowners incentives for managing invasive species
- Political awareness and leadership to address the problem
- Comprehensive education standards at all age levels NAAEE partners... themes, info taught at various levels and keep building upon ... Very Basic R9 Non-invasive kit
- Citizen scientists for monitoring and action... Help reconnect people with the land!
- Clearinghouse (user friendly) where all information is placed

What specifically does the field need in order to get the job done?

Large Group Brainstorm:



- Focused leadership
- Instructions on how to get there...a strategic plan
- Leadership at the top needs to address global issues
- Tell us what our role is in the big picture
- Identify the problems that affect healthy ecosystems
- Integrate science and public education
- Clearinghouse and effective dissemination of environmental educational and invasive species education
- Collaboration with agencies and publics... communication skills

- Encourage and expand state partner projects... don't reinvent the wheel!
- Support policy makers and local educators
- A framework on invasives for new employee orientation
- Know already existing inventory
- Need materials that are easily accessible and inexpensive
- Invasive specimen boxes, posters, pocket guide etc.
- Awards system for people who are making a difference and doing the right thing

- Marketing/promotion of forest services new image and the four threats... ad campaign, TV, radio ... a proactive media campaign
- The freedom to be creative
- Funds specific to invasive species education
- Dollars to eradicate species in national forest land
- More personnel to do programs and landscape maintenance

